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12 November 1973

MEMORANDUM FOR: Legislative Counsel  
THROUGH : Deputy Director for Intelligence  
SUBJECT : Response to Senator Baker's letter

1. The allegations concerning Helms' conversation with the Watch Office on the weekend of 17 - 18 June 1972 are clearly false. The Operations Center's report on this episode, together with its logs, is attached. For a full account these materials should be combined with D/OS' account of the rest of the story. One point should be added. The Duty Officer with whom Helms spoke on Saturday afternoon and on Sunday morning has been interviewed. He has no recollection of having discussed the Watergate affair with Helms on these or any other occasions, and it would have been most uncharacteristic for him to have done so.

2. My own recollection is that Helms told his morning meeting on Monday that he had had a quiet evening at home ruined by a call from Howard Osborn telling him "Boss, I have some repulsive news for you," and going on to inform him that Hunt and McCord were involved. I assume this is the call which D/OS reported to the Watch Office at 2217 Saturday evening and which is mentioned in Helms' testimony and mismentioned in Rowan's column. The Watch Office is under the impression that Helms had gone to Lewes for the weekend, but I believe they are wrong about this and that he was at home in Washington. The morning meeting minutes of Monday contain Helms' instructions on how to handle the affair but do not mention the particular language I have quoted. I suspect, however, that the others who were there will also remember it vividly.

3. St. George's reference to Kissinger's return of estimates and memoranda with obscenities sprawled across

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them is of course also false. When Kissinger came to the White House he had a number of criticisms of specific CIA papers and often returned them with specific comments, requests for development or clarification, or challenges to the theses presented. He also was highly complimentary on a number of other CIA papers during the same period. All of this was read here as being part of the normal process of adjustment from one administration to another.

4. This story has appeared previously in print, although we are unable collectively to remember where. Its genesis is possibly Kissinger's unhappiness with the major military estimates because they did not develop fully enough and precisely enough questions that were in dispute, and did not bring out fully the reasoning and evidence underlying the various agency positions. In response to this pressure a new approach was developed for NIE 11-8, and the new product drew a complimentary memorandum from the President.

5. The remainder of this section of St. George's article somehow wraps up Kissinger's efforts to improve the production of national intelligence with the efforts of Ehrlichman, Colson, et. al in domestic espionage in a single package, and this in turn becomes an assault on the Intelligence Community's "vital monopoly" as the President's only source of intelligence information. Enough said.

*Signed*  
Richard Lehman  
Director of Current Intelligence

Attachment: a/s.

Concur:

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Deputy Director for Intelligence

1. Nov. 873

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